

Forest Service, USDA

§ 218.8

postal, fax, and email address, the acceptable format(s) for objections filed electronically, and the reviewing officer's business hours for those filing hand-delivered objections.

(ii) A statement that objections will be accepted only from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with § 218.5(a). The statement must also specify that issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after designated opportunities.

(iii) A statement that the publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record or FEDERAL REGISTER notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (see §§ 218.26(a) and 218.32(a)), and that those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. A specific date must not be included in the notice.

(iv) A statement that an objection, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the appropriate reviewing officer (see §§ 218.3 and 218.8) within 30 days of the date of publication of the legal notice for the objection process if the proposal is an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, or within 45 days if the proposal is otherwise a project or activity implementing a land management plan. The statement must also describe the evidence of timely filing in § 218.9.

(v) A statement describing the minimum content requirements of an objection (see § 218.8(d)) and identify that incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided for at § 218.8(b).

(d) Within 4 calendar days of the date of publication of the legal notice in the newspaper of record or, when applicable, the FEDERAL REGISTER, a digital image of the legal notice or FEDERAL REGISTER publication, or the exact text of the notice, must be made available on the Web. Such postings must clearly

indicate the date the notice was published in the newspaper of record or FEDERAL REGISTER, and the name of the publication.

(e) Through notice published annually in the FEDERAL REGISTER, each regional forester must advise the public of the newspaper(s) of record utilized for publishing legal notice required by this part.

§ 218.8 Filing an objection.

(a) Objections must be filed with the reviewing officer in writing. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

(b) Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed, except for the following list of items that may be referenced by including date, page, and section of the cited document, along with a description of its content and applicability to the objection. All other documents must be included with the objection.

(1) All or any part of a Federal law or regulation.

(2) Forest Service directives and land management plans.

(3) Documents referenced by the Forest Service in the proposed project EA or EIS that is subject to objection.

(4) Comments previously provided to the Forest Service by the objector during public involvement opportunities for the proposed project where written comments were requested by the responsible official.

(c) Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities for comment. The burden is on the objector to demonstrate compliance with this requirement for objection issues (see paragraph (d)(6) of this section).

(d) At a minimum, an objection must include the following:

(1) Objector's name and address as defined in § 218.2, with a telephone number, if available;

(2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the objection);

§218.9

(3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in §218.2. Verification of the identity of the lead objector must be provided upon request or the reviewing officer will designate a lead objector as provided in §218.5(d);

(4) The name of the proposed project, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name(s) of the national forest(s) and/or ranger district(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented;

(5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and

(6) A statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunity(ies) for comment (see paragraph (c) of this section).

§218.9 Evidence of timely filing.

(a) It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer. Timeliness must be determined by the following indicators:

(1) The date of the U.S. Postal Service postmark for an objection received before the close of the fifth business day after the objection filing period;

(2) The agency's electronically generated posted date and time for email and facsimiles;

(3) The shipping date for delivery by private carrier for an objection received before the close of the fifth business day after the objection filing period; or

(4) The official agency date stamp showing receipt of hand delivery.

(b) For emailed objections, the sender should receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an auto-

36 CFR Ch. II (7–1–17 Edition)

mated acknowledgment of receipt of the objection, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely filing by other means.

§218.10 Objections set aside from review.

(a) The reviewing officer must set aside and not review an objection when one or more of the following applies:

(1) Objections are not filed in a timely manner (see §§218.7(c)(2)(v) and 218.9).

(2) The proposed project is not subject to the objection procedures in §§218.1, 218.4, 218.20, and 218.31.

(3) The individual or entity did not submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity during scoping or another designated opportunity for public comment (see §218.5(a)).

(4) Except for issues that arose after the opportunities for comment, none of the issues included in the objection are based on previously submitted specific written comments and the objector has not provided a statement demonstrating a connection between the comments and objected issues (see §§218.8(c) and 218.8(d)(6)).

(5) The objection does not provide sufficient information as required by §218.8(d)(5) and (6) for the reviewing officer to review.

(6) The objector withdraws the objection.

(7) An objector's identity is not provided or cannot be determined from the signature (written or electronically scanned) and a reasonable means of contact is not provided (see §218.8(d)(1) and (2)).

(8) The objection is illegible for any reason, including submissions in an electronic format different from that specified in the legal notice.

(9) The responsible official cancels the objection process underway to re-initiate the objection procedures at a later date or withdraw the proposed project or activity.

(b) The reviewing officer must give prompt written notice to the objector and the responsible official when an objection is set aside from review and must state the reasons for not reviewing the objection. If the objection is set